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*"A thought lay like a flower upon mine heart  
And drew around it other thoughts, like bees  
For multitude and thirst of sweetnesses"*



We do the best work always when we use the things we love, the things we know.

Those of us who have been born and lived all our lives on western prairies, can never be completely at home among mountains, no matter how much we learn to love them and feel their sublimity; we always look at them from the outside, and not from the in. They are in truth, foreign to us.

So an American's interpretation of foreigners, foreign customs and landscapes, must necessarily be from the outside also.

I don't believe an American can ever paint a peasant, as Israels, Breton and Millet have painted them, because the best of every country has been done by her own sons and daughters, and not by the stranger from out the gates.

Then why attempt where we can not excel?

It is certainly right for our artists to go abroad for study, to see the very best works of the best masters, to place their ideals high. But when that is done they ought to come home; not one of them can afford to sell his birthright.

Not only should we be national, but we will do better work if we are local. I would draw the circle as close as one's own state; nay, even so narrow as one's own county. In one county may lie the work of a lifetime, for it does not matter at what spring you drink, provided it be living water.

*Extracts  
from  
a paper by  
Alma G. White*

*"He is the true artist whose life is his material"  
"A man has not seen a thing who has not felt it"  
"A man does best when he is most himself"*

*Thoreau*

PAINT WHAT  
YOU SEE

Thoreau considered Concord the center of the universe, and claimed to have found there all natural phenomena, even to the red arctic snow.

A sense of the wonder, the mystery and the miraculous will come into one's heart as fully after a walk over one's own field as by a journey round the world.

If we would and must imitate Europeans, let us imitate them in this, that, with few exceptions, they were and are extremely local. Meissonier, Gerome, Leys and Vandyke, did not leave home until they were cultured artists. Rembrandt never left Amsterdam at all. The right kind of a worker will work simply for the work's sake, for, if it is worth doing at all, it is worth doing very faithfully, very patiently, very lovingly.

The things we love, how tenderly we work with them! every touch is a lover's touch, lingering, gentle, reverent. Says Goethe, "A genuine, really great talent finds its greatest happiness in execution."

Inferior talents do not enjoy art for its own sake. But with worldly views and tendencies nothing great was ever yet accomplished.

Every true worker will find his own way; an earnest soul makes a way for itself, as an out door fire makes a chimney for itself in the air. A man who strives thus, working only because the work's worth doing, letting fame and the world's opinion be subordinate to his own faithfulness to himself, such men you can not "down." They are elastic. The more opposition, the more determination.

If a worker knows how to use his tools, and if he have perseverance and determination, fervent aspirations and a high ideal, let him alone; he will hew his own path, and the way will be original. All the community may scream because one man is born who will not conform, because conformity to him is *death*. But doctrines, antipathies and creeds are and have always been against originality. It is hard for men to accept other men

"What's within our ken,  
Owl like, we blink at, and direct our search  
To farthest Inde in quest of novelties,  
Whilst here, at home, upon our very thresholds,  
Ten thousand objects hurtle into view  
Of interest wonderful"  
"It is living art which thus presents  
And thus records true life"

Mrs. Browning

as they are. If I could only twist them to my belief! But we don't want people alike. If we seek to acquire the style of another we lose the *individual* style we might have acquired. Let us keep to that which we like, that which we feel.

PAINT WHAT  
YOU SEE

Millet, Breton, Corot, and Rousseau, in fact the whole Barbizon school, were innovations on the artistic tastes of 1830. The consequence was, Rousseau's pictures were refused the Salon for twenty years. Eugene Delacroix, the apostle of color, was more fortunate; half of his only were rejected. Decamps and Jules Dupré would not exhibit at all. Corot, who has proved to the world that motion of air and leaves can be painted, kept away with the rest. Diaz was despised; Millet braved the lion in his den and had his poorest pictures accepted; Breton after four years of despair shook the dust of Paris from his feet and went back to his old home.

We see that great good came of all this, a blessing in disguise. It brought all of these men into new life, for it threw them back into the arms of their old nurse nature, whom they had almost abandoned. She took these children on her knee, saying, "Here is a story book the Father hath written for thee," and they were given the power to illustrate it. So each interpreted in his own way, just as the man was, each from his own vantage-ground. Each man gave us life, real life, as he had felt and experienced it.

We must quiver all through with a sensation before we can describe it. We must be at a white heat before we can fire others.

Audubon looked like a bird, he was part bird. 'Twas said of Landseer that he knew exactly how a kicked dog felt.

Intense sympathy will tell you more of persons and things than can be put into words or paint. There is, too, a perfect democracy in the realm of the beautiful and whatever pleases is equal to any other thing there, no matter how low its origin or humble its composition.

*"O thou sculptor, painter, poet,  
Take this lesson to thy heart,  
That is best which lieth nearest,  
Shape from that thy work of art."*

*Longfellow*

PAINT WHAT  
YOU SEE

, This is lifting the curtain from the common, to find that there is a touch of good somewhere in all if we only know how to reach it, and the only way to reach it is by a kindred fellow-feeling.

It is the universal truth that not alone by painting, but in all things, letters, sculpture, oratory and acting, there must be at heart a melting royal fire which, permeating, transmits the light and warmth within. No matter how intellectual, if cold at the heart, no one is moved to better impulses. Iago was all intellect and no heart. "Every true voice must have a heart-beat in it."

An orator must believe implicitly what he is saying, to move his audience. True eloquence does not lie in rhetoric, grammar or pronunciation. These beautify, they are the clothes, but in the belief that is flaming from the heart of the man must he be lifted above himself. These things must live in us before we can give them out. That the man actually possesses the thought or feeling with which he inspires us, of heroism, of purity, of beauty, what higher compliment?

We all of us, a few times in our lives, thus touch the heavens, and it is the transcriptions of the moments when men really live that sweeten the world.

Rachel on her deathbed said: "Declamation and gesture are of no avail; you have to think to weep." 'Tis the tension of the tight drawn cord that gives the music, not the slack string.

We ought to sing and paint, carve, act and plead the ideal, the real well seen; to love humanity and nature, to believe in progress, to pray, to wonder and worship, toward the infinite, that our eyes may be opened. "The perception of beauty is a moral test."

The Lord is in his holy temple; those who see bow reverently; to them all is holy ground. So many can talk for one who can think, so many can think for one who can feel, so many can feel for one who can see. To see clearly is poetry, religion, prophecy in one. No matter how deep we go, we only

*"No meanest object is insignificant; when  
rightly viewed, they are the windows through  
which the philosophic eye looks into infinitude  
itself"*

*"The Ideal is the Real well seen"*

*Carlyle*

*"I have never uttered anything which I  
have not experienced and which has not urged  
me to production"*

*Goethe*

find surface still. "Veil after veil will lift, but there must be veil upon veil behind. We can never see or hear to the end; there is always something unseen and unheard."

PAINT WHAT  
YOU SEE

The beauty around us in our own county, our own doorway! We can be steeped to the lips in it if we will. Sky! the same the wide world over, covering for rich and poor alike. Beautifully balanced clouds which sail and sail.

"We are rained on, snowed on with gems." Raindrops whose tiny sphere holds a planet's elements. Snowflakes, children of an ecstasy.

"The tumultuous privacy" of the snowstorm; when the earth is covered with these perfect things, and all is still, we have "a lifeless copy of the world in marble." Running water, ice forms—sometimes 'tis a crash of jewels when we walk.

Oh, the scintillating light, the splendor of luster, the sparkle, the gleam, the opaline tints, the enchantment of a morning when the transparent, pellucid ice covers bush and shrub and grass and tree, and they bud to diamond, amethyst and topaz.

Color of grass, of weeds, of old fences and boards, of mosses, lichens, of grain, of rotten trees, of grass, of hornet's nests, of blossoms. Our sunrises and sunsets.

We are opulent in color. The splendor of a well-used plowshare is the despair of an artist.

Soil pregnant with life, bearing annunciation lilies for the year; it "springs to a soul in grass and flowers."

Trees, a noble brotherhood; indeed, I love them; they have real life to me, and all the virtues, too; and the fallen ones that nobody makes shrouds for, how Nature covers them all over with new life.

The birds, the butterflies, the moths, the bumble bees, those heavy-winged thieves; all animal life.

And our Indian summer, here only where Indian feet have trod does this sacrament of summer days come. It is always

*"The highest praise we can attribute to any writer, painter, sculptor, builder, is that he actually possessed the thought or feeling with which he has inspired us"*

*"In daily life what distinguishes the master is the using those materials he has, instead of looking about for what are more renowned, or what others have used well"*

*"We owe to genius always the same debt of lifting the curtain from the common"*

Emerson

PAINT WHAT  
YOU SEE

associated with the Indian; it is red and yellow and dusky like him; the smoke of his camp-fire is still in the air and the memory of him pervades the woods.

These things speak to us, everything a sermon or a book. Nature is ambassadress for God, and gives us these gospels of the pure and fair. Miracles upon miracles, we can only say with Job: "I will lay my hand upon my mouth." A city is no place for a landscape painter. He must live among his scenes; he must be saturated with them, filled to the brim. Every scene has its own charm, a glory of the sun and another of the moon, a glory of the mountains and another of the prairies, a democracy in the realm of the beautiful.

Only tell the tale given you, and tell it of the things within your reach.

An artist can never be satisfied; when he gets to that point, he is paralyzed, he is dead.

We stand on the threshold and get a glimpse of the promised land, we are "playing at paste 'till qualified for pearl." It is always the picture we never paint, the song we never write. Heaven surely will give to its disciples in a fair good time a complete revelation of her beauty; and if there is light, motion, color, as there is here, we shall like eternity.

ALMA G. WHITE

"We are made so that we love  
First, when we see them painted, things we have passed  
Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see,  
And so they are better painted, better to us,  
Which is the same thing, art was given for that"  
Robt. Browning



Mr. Whistler  
to the Attorney-  
General in the  
Ruskin law suit

I should not disapprove in any way of technical criticism by a man whose whole life is passed in the practice of the science which he criticises; but for the opinion of a man whose life is not so passed I would have as little regard as you would, if he expressed an opinion on law.